|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
|  | Walter Dean Myers Harlem | What does he mean by this? |
| 1 | They took the road in Waycross, Georgia  Skipped over the tracks in East St. Louis  Took the bus from Holly Springs  Hitched a ride from Gee’s Bend  Took the long way through Memphis  The third deck down from **[Trinidad](http://www.cnn.com/TRAVEL/CITY.GUIDES/WORLD/Americas/trinidad/bigmap.html" \t "_blank)**  A wrench of heart from **[Goree Island](http://webster.commnet.edu/stuweb/%7Ediop3212/negre.htm" \t "_blank)**  A wrench of heart from Goree Island  To a place called  Harlem | I believe this poem describes how far blacks has came before most came to Harlem |
| 2 | Harlem was a promise  Of a better life,  of a place where a man  Didn’t have to know his place  Simply because  He was Black    They brought a call  A song  First heard in the villages of  **[Ghana/Mali/Senegal](http://www.library.northwestern.edu/africana/map/" \t "_blank)**  Calls and songs and shouts  Heavy hearted tambourine rhythms  Loosed in the hard city  Like a scream torn from the throat  Of an ancient clarinet | Harlem was a place where blacks could be themselves. They brought new tradition and songs to Harlem. |
| 3 | A new sound, raucous and sassy  Cascading over the asphalt village  Breaking against the black sky over  **[1-2-5 Street](http://harlemdiscover.com/harlemweek/map.htm" \t "_blank)**  Announcing Hallelujah  Riffing past resolution    Yellow, tan, brown, black, red  Green, gray, bright  Colors loud enough to be heard  Light on asphalt streets  Sun yellow shirts on burnt umber  Bodies  Demanding to be heard  Seen  Sending out warriors |  |
| 4 | From streets known to be  Mourning still as a lone radio tells us how  **[Jack Johnson](http://www.si.umich.edu/CHICO/Harlem/text/jajohnson.html" \t "_blank)**  **[Joe Louis](http://www.cmgww.com/sports/louis/louis.html" \t "_blank)**  **[Sugar Ray](http://www.cmgww.com/sports/robinson/biography.html" \t "_blank)**  Is doing with our hopes.    We hope  We pray  Our black skins  Reflecting the face of God  In storefront temples    Jive and Jehovah artists  Lay out the human canvas  The **[mood indigo](http://www.purplelion.com/anouk/song11.shtml" \t "_blank)** |  |
| 5 | A chorus of summer herbs  Of mangoes and bar-b-que  Of perfumed sisters  Hip strutting past  Fried fish joints  On **[Lenox Avenue](http://harlemdiscover.com/harlemweek/map.htm" \t "_blank)** in steamy August    A carnival of children  People in the daytime streets  **[Ring-a-levio](http://www.czbrats.com/Facts/ring-a-levio.htm" \t "_blank)** warriors  **[Stickball](http://www.streetplay.com/stickball/" \t "_blank)** heroes  Hide-and-seek knights and ladies  Waiting to sing their own sweet songs  Living out their own slam-dunk dreams  Listening  For the coming of the blues |  |
| 6 | A weary blues that **[Langston](http://www.galegroup.com/free_resources/bhm/bio/hughes_l.htm" \t "_blank)** knew  And **[Countee](http://www.poets.org/poets/poets.cfm?45442B7C000C0303" \t "_blank)** sung  A river of blues  Where **[Du Bois](http://www.si.umich.edu/CHICO/Harlem/text/dubois.html" \t "_blank)** waded  And **[Baldwin](http://www.pbs.org/wnet/americanmasters/database/baldwin_j.html" \t "_blank)** preached    There is lilt  Tempo  Cadence  A language of darkness  Darkness known  Darkness sharpened at **[Mintons](http://www.streetplay.com/stickball/halloffame/mintons.shtml" \t "_blank)**  Darkness lightened at the **[Cotton Club](http://www.retroswingusa.com/cotton.htm" \t "_blank)**  Sent flying from **[Abyssinian Baptist](http://www.nyc.worldweb.com/NewYorkCity/SightsAttractions/ChurchesTemples/" \t "_blank)**  To the **[Apollo](http://www.apollotheater.com/about.shtm" \t "_blank)**. |  |
| 7 | The **[uptown A](http://www.mta.nyc.ny.us/nyct/maps/submap.htm" \t "_blank)**  Rattles past **[110](http://harlemdiscover.com/harlemweek/map.htm" \t "_blank)[th](http://harlemdiscover.com/harlemweek/map.htm" \t "_blank) [Street](http://harlemdiscover.com/harlemweek/map.htm" \t "_blank)**  Unreal to real  Relaxing the soul    Shango and Jesus  **[Asante](http://www.uiowa.edu/%7Eafricart/toc/people/Asante.html" \t "_blank)** and **[Mende](http://www.ethnologue.com/show_language.asp?code=MFY" \t "_blank)**  One people  A hundred different people  Huddled masses  And crowded dreams    Squares  Blocks, bricks  Fat, round woman in a rectangle  Sunday night gospel  “Precious Lord…take my hand,  Lead me on, let me stand…”    Caught by a full lipped  Full hipped Saint  Washing **[collard greens](http://www.aboutproduce.com/produce/commodity.asp?C=Greens,+Collard" \t "_blank)**  In a cracked porcelain sink  Backing up **[Lady Day](http://www.cmgww.com/music/holiday/bio.html" \t "_blank)** on the radio |  |
| 8 | Brother so black and blue  Patting a wide foot outside the  Too hot Walk-up  “Boy,  You ought to find the guys who told you  you could play some **[checkers](http://www.darkfish.com/checkers/Checkers.html" \t "_blank)**  ‘cause he done lied to you!”    Cracked reed and soprano sax laughter  Floats over  a fleet of funeral cars    In Harlem  Sparrows sit on fire escapes  Outside **[rent parties](http://memory.loc.gov/ammem/ndlpedu/features/timeline/progress/prohib/rent.html" \t "_blank)**  To learn the tunes.    In Harlem  The wind doesn’t blow past **[Smalls](http://web.ukonline.co.uk/tc/hoofersclub/smalls.html" \t "_blank)**  It stops to listen to the sounds  Serious business  A poem, rhapsody tripping along  **[Striver’s Row](http://www.mediaworkshop.org/kidsinstitute/weirdos/html/striversrow.html" \t "_blank)**  Not getting it’s metric feel soiled  On the well-swept walks  Hustling through the hard rain at two o’clock  In the morning to its next gig. |  |
| 9 | A huddle of horns  And a tinkle of glass  A note  Handed down from **[Marcus](http://www.expo98.msu.edu/bios/garvey.html" \t "_blank)** to **[Malcolm](http://www.cmgww.com/historic/malcolm/bio.html" \t "_blank)**  To a brother  Too bad and too cool to give his name.    Sometimes despair  Makes the stoops shudder  Sometimes there are endless depths of pain  Singing a capella on street corners    And sometimes not.    Sometimes it is the artist  looking into the mirror  Painting a portrait of his own heart.    Place  Sound  Celebration  Memories of feelings  Of place    A journey on the A train  That started on the banks of the **[Niger](http://www.lonelyplanet.com/mapshells/africa/nigeria/nigeria.htm" \t "_blank)**  And has not ended    Harlem. |  |